

Attendance Policy

The Mission Statement of Athboy Community School which refers to facilitating and encouraging pupils to reach their full potential. Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Athboy Community School is charged with developing and implementing strategies which will foster an appreciation of learning and encourage regular attendance among its students. Other related legislation include the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Act (2000) and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004).

The following document outlines the ways in which pupils will be encouraged to attend and participate actively in the life of the school.

Priorities for Development

The Education Welfare Act 2000 identifies nine key areas for developing a strategy which will foster an appreciation of learning and promote regular attendance and participation:

1. Rewarding of a good attendance record.
2. Identifying developing attendance problems.
3. Liaising with homes of at risk students.
4. Networking with other schools, local clubs, youth organisations and others.
5. Promoting extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
6. Encouraging full participation.
7. Promoting good behaviour.
8. Ensuring meaningful curriculum.
9. Simplifying procedures for attendance and participation.

School Policies

By means of the following policies, and other policies to be developed, the school will develop strategies in the key areas above.

Under the Pastoral Care System each pupil's progress will be monitored on a weekly basis. Support will be given where pupils encounter difficulty. In particular, attendance will be monitored by the Year Head and early intervention will be made where a problem is seen to emerge. This may involve speaking with the pupils concerned and liaising with their parents/guardians or guardians. The Year Head and subject teachers will praise pupils for good behaviour, good progress and, particularly, good attendance.

The Code of Discipline will act in such a way as to minimise the number of days lost by pupils to suspension by using alternative sanctions such as detention at lunch time for low level misbehaviour. The school will at all times actively promote and reward good behaviour.

Athboy Community School will promote a broad range of Extra-Curricular Activities which will encourage pupils to attend school and to participate fully in the life of the

school. The school will attempt to create as many opportunities for success as possible in these areas.

The school will also facilitate a range of Co-Curricular Activities which will extend and support the work of students in the formal classroom.

In designing the Curriculum, the school will strive to match the aptitudes and needs of the students by providing a broad range of programmes and subjects which will be suited to the potential of the pupils.

Various methods of Assessment will be used and this will be done on a continual basis so that pupils will be given regular feedback on their achievements as well as the opportunity to accumulate credits regularly throughout the year which will contribute towards their end of year mark. Marks for attendance and homework may also be included. Corrections will include advice on how to improve on areas in the future as well as praise for work well done.

The school's Special Educational Needs Policy will encourage and support pupils who encounter difficulty with specific areas of the curriculum and school life.

The Anti-Bullying Policy will support this Attendance policy.

Primary School Liaison will identify pre-existing problems of non-attendance and will appropriate preventative action at the earliest juncture.

The school's Healthy Eating Policy informs pupils on the benefits of healthy eating habits and encourages them to choose healthy food options. A Breakfast Club caters for those students who wish to avail of it.

The school's Awards Policy will recognise pupil attendance. Year Heads will co-ordinate the presentation of Certificates of Full-Attendance (Teastais Lántinrimh) at the end of each month. Special awards will be made to those pupils who have full attendance for the year.

In addition to specific policies outlined above, the school will adopt a pro-active approach to school attendance as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 by:

- Maintaining a register of students attending the school.
- Recording school attendance and notifying the educational welfare officer of particular problems in relation to attendance.
- Supporting students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis.
- Liaising with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues.
- Provide on-line access to attendance details for parents/guardians via the school's ePortal system

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

The importance of full attendance to school by pupils will be stressed to parents/guardians at every opportunity. Through talks, newsletters and communication with the school parents/guardians will be made aware of their responsibilities under the Act. The act provides that:

- Parents/guardians shall send their children to a recognised school on each school day or otherwise ensure that they are receiving an appropriate minimum education.
- Where a child is absent from school on a school day, the parents/guardians shall notify the principal of the school in writing of the reasons for such absence.
- Parents will be consulted by school management on school attendance issues and on the school Code of Behaviour and Code of Discipline.

School Personnel

Subject teachers will monitor attendance of pupils in their subjects and will notify the Year Head if they are concerned. Alternatively, they may choose to contact parents/guardians.

Year Heads will monitor punctuality and attendance of all pupils in the year group and will contact parents/guardians if a problem emerges. The Year Head will notify the Principal if the situation does not improve.

The Principal may contact the NEWB where it is obvious that a serious problem exists and is not being rectified (this may be before 20 days have elapsed). The Principal may also ask the school's Guidance Counsellor and/or Chaplain to liaise with the pupil, his or her parents/guardians and the NEWB, the HSE or other interested parties.

A regular review of attendance and analysis of reasons for non-attendance will be carried out by the school's Middle Management Team. This information will be made available to the Board of Management in the form of An Annual Review of Attendance and will include a copy of the Attendance Report sent to the NEWB.

Review of Policy

The Board of Management will consider the Annual Review of Attendance and will make recommendations on implementation of the Attendance Policy as deemed appropriate.